

# St. Mary's Primary School, Killyleagh



*“Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow”*

## Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy Addendum Covid-19

Policy reviewed by staff – Sept 2020

Policy reviewed and ratified by Governors- Nov 2020

Signature of Chair \_\_\_\_\_

## **Context**

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak of Covid-19.

Despite the changes, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT in line with our established safeguarding procedures.**

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, spending increased time at home will have been an additional challenge, and for some, an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in the school and following advice from government and local agencies.

We continue to adhere to government guidelines and keep abreast of any updated advice from the Education Authority Child Protection Support Service.

## **Procedures**

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Teacher is: **Mrs Hagan**

The Deputy Designated Teacher is: **Mrs Martin**

The school's approach ensures the DT or a deputy is always on site while the school is open.

Staff will continue to follow Child Protection procedures and advise the safeguarding team immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Should a child, in the school's view be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the school will take advice from the EA Child Protection Support Service.

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

### **Attendance**

Staff will follow our Attendance Policy and Procedures.

The DT will attempt a range of methods to contact the parents/carers of children who are absent. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child.

The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the school to ensure children and young people are safe.

The DT will liaise with the Education Welfare Service if contact proves impossible with children at home.

## **Blended Learning**

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety in the event of pupils having to isolate as a result of having a positive Covid 19 result or being identified as a close contact to someone who has been advised to isolate.

- The safeguarding team email addresses and main school phone number have been made available to all parents.
- Teachers will provide online learning via *Seesaw* (FS & KS1) and *Google Classroom* (KS2) on the second day of absence with procedures in place to minimise risk.

## **Prolonged School Closure**

In the event of a **prolonged school closure** we have put in place specific arrangements:

- The Safeguarding Team will still liaise regularly with Social Services and Education Welfare and attend case conferences and LAC reviews via Zoom.
- Regular phone calls will be made to parents/carers by the Principal, teachers and classroom/learning assistants to provide encouragement and support if necessary. Staff have been informed about signposting parents who need help to the Gateway service or the Family Support Hub. Staff log phone calls on CPOMS and alert the safeguarding team if there are any pastoral or safeguarding issues which can then be followed up. If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff.

## **Online Safety**

Please refer to the remote learning policy.

### **How a parent can raise an issue or express a concern**

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the safeguarding team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

If a parent wishes to contact a member of the Safeguarding team directly they can be contacted on the following email addresses

Designated Teacher Mrs Hagan- [ohagan279@c2kni.net](mailto:ohagan279@c2kni.net)

Deputy Designated Teacher Mrs Martin [-fmartin441@c2kni.net](mailto:fmartin441@c2kni.net)

### **If school is open during COVID-19 closures**

If school is to open for children, the school will adhere to the EA guidance.

If our school is part of a cluster of schools which are opened we will share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Teacher and/or Principal. In accordance with our Child Protection procedures this information will be shared on a need to know basis.

In any event, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

### **How a child can raise a concern**

We know that while many children will be enjoying their time at home during a covid-19 closure and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will seek to maintain contact with our children and young people as well as signpost them to other agencies.

We will use the following means to connect with our children:

- Interaction via Seesaw or Google Classroom
- Scheduled wellbeing video conferencing check ins with the class teacher weekly.
- Children will be made aware of the Childline phone number.

### **Other Agencies**

- CEOP/Thinkuknow
- Childnet
- Safer Schools App

## **SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: -**

Gateway 028 9050 7000 (ask for the Duty Social Worker)

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Safeguarding team will review and amend these arrangements regularly in line with Departmental guidance and advice.